



JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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Work in Progress

One of the most pressing needs of present day research scholarship is a continuation of the invaluable *Work in Progress*, begun and carried on so effectively in the past by Jim Osborn (Yale). The last issue of this work appeared in 1942, but because of the war none has been issued since that time.

During the active hostilities, when colleges and universities were busy with army and navy teaching, and literary investigations were at a minimum, there was no obvious need for any pooling of information. But now with the sudden tremendous increase in graduate instruction, and with hundreds of new projects being started all over the country, it is desperately necessary that some sort of a clearing house for titles be established *at once*.

Unfortunately, no new issue of the *W.I.P.* by the Modern Humanities Research Association appears imminent, and indeed it is not certain that this organization will be able permanently to carry on the project. Thus in the meantime some temporary arrangements ought to be made to serve the same purpose.

What has stirred up your editor to this urgent plea has been a series of frightening events in the past few weeks. Here is a sample. For several years a worker in New York City has been indefatigably struggling with a complete topic index to Defoe's *Review*. Suddenly comes word of another index to the same work, about to be completed on the Pacific coast. Perhaps there are others in progress elsewhere in this country or abroad. But certainly there is room for only one good index to the *Review*. The result of all this will be many heartaches and hundreds of hours lost. Moreover, there are probably scores of similar overlappings — many conscientious and devoted scholars who are collecting the same information, considering the same special problems, and writing similar criticisms at this very moment. A terrifying thought!

Something obviously must be done — and done immediately! Of that your editor is certain, and he means to get right to work. One way

to help 18th century scholars, at least, would be through the pages of this News Letter. If every reader will send in lists of his own topics and those of his friends (Dryden through 1800); if Heads of Departments everywhere will send us lists of 18th century research being carried out at their institutions; if correspondents in England will send over whatever can be gleaned there; we can gradually collect and publicize information about what is being done in our own period.

Please do not wait to be solicited individually. Send in lists of your research topics at once, so that they may be included in the next *J.N.L.* Please give all the information which was formerly included in *W.I.P.* listings, and, if you wish, include a very short explanation of the exact nature of the investigations. Each succeeding issue of the News Letter will include a number of pages of lists of topics. If all of you will co-operate, we will keep work on the 18th century, at least, relatively free from tragic duplications.

A FEW PRELIMINARY LISTINGS

General

BROWN, Wallace C. (Univ. of Kansas City). *The Later Masters of the Heroic Couplet* (This will deal with Gay, Johnson, Churchill, Goldsmith, and Crabbe as the "masters" and with Young and Cowper as more minor users of the couplet. A part of the chapter on Johnson will appear in an article entitled "Johnson as Poet" in an early issue of the *M.L.Q.*)

Burke

SISTER MARY AMEROSIA, C.F.M.I.C. (St. Agnes Residence, 237 W. 74th St., New York 23, N.Y.) *Edmund Burke: Critic of Eighteenth Century Literature*. D (Fordham)

Churchill

BROWN, Wallace C. (Univ. of Kansas City). *A Critical Biography of Charles Churchill*.

Garrick

PEDICORD, Harry W. (First Presbyterian Church, Bridgeport, Pa.). *Garrick's Audiences*. D (Pennsylvania)

Johnson

GOODYEAR, Louis E. (1659 Oak St., San Francisco, Calif.). *Johnson and the Law*.

ROSENFRED, Mary Virginia (909 W. Wayne St., Fort Wayne 2, Indiana). *A Life of Dr. Johnson for Young People*.

Swift

REDINGER, Ruby V. (Fenn College, Cleveland, Ohio). *A study of Swift's thought and expression -- chiefly of his techniques of irony and the positive ideas that determined his irony.*

Augustan Reprint Society

A most valuable aid to research scholarship in the 1660-1800 period is just about to be launched by Dick Boys (Mich.), Edward Hooker and T. H. Swedenberg (U.C.L.A.). This is an organization to make available cheap facsimile reprints of rare short works in prose and verse, which most scholars can now obtain only after the greatest effort. Instead of resorting to the lengthy troubles of inter-library loan or the procuring of photostats or microfilms, scholars will gradually be able to secure usable facsimiles, produced as cheaply as modern practice will allow.

Since an advertising folder describing the project is about to be issued, no complete explanation will be given here. Briefly, however, the plan is as follows: subscribers will be offered 6 numbers a year, at a yearly cost of only \$2.50. No elaborate scholarly apparatus will be provided for each issue, but a short introduction giving pertinent critical and bibliographical details will be included.

The first issue, which includes Blackmore's *Essay upon Wit* (1716) and Addison's "reply" (*Freeholder*, 45), is already in the press; the second, Cobb's verse treatise *Of Poetry* and his *Discourse on Criticism*, is also ready. Boys has provided the short introduction for the first issue, and L. I. Bredvold (Mich.) for the second.

We are confident that most of our readers will wish to belong to this tremendously worth-while project. Certainly we can think of few better ways for a scholar to spend \$2.50.

The English Institute

The complete program of the fifth meeting of the English Institute, to be held at Columbia University, Sept. 9-13, is ready to be announced; and a descriptive folder will be mailed to all M.L.A. members within the next few weeks. If our readers know of interested scholars not likely to be reached by the M.L.A. mailing lists, please send this information to your editor, who is serving as temporary Secretary of the Institute while Rudolf Kirk is at the Huntington Library.

As in the past, the program will be divided into four main conference sections. This year the titles and leaders of the sections are:

- I. *Contributions of Other Fields to the Study of Medieval Literature*, directed by Dorothy Bethurum (Conn. College) and Frances Foster (Vassar)
- II. *The Critical Significance of Biographical Evidence*, directed by Gerald E. Bentley (Princeton)
- III. *Facsimiles, Forgeries, and Reprints*, directed by Allen T. Hazen (Chicago)
- IV. *Methods of Literary Studies*, directed by Arthur Mizener (Carleton College)

A complete list of the speakers for all sessions, and all necessary information about registration and local arrangements, will be included in the program folder.

English Institute Annuals

Copies are still available at the Columbia University Press of the four volumes containing papers presented at the 1939, 1940, 1941 and 1942 meetings of the English Institute. Included in each volume are papers of interest to 18th century enthusiasts. So be sure that your college or university library has a complete set for reference (Prices \$2.00 each for the first two volumes and \$2.50 for the last two).

A Fascinating Hypothesis

Those of you who were at the Chicago M.L.A. meetings will remember that the late Arthur Case made an interesting distinction between two kinds of historical conjectures: those like his amusing reconstruction of the death of Shelley which have no value because they can never be proved or disproved; and those like his surmise concerning Swift's supposed ingratitude toward his uncle Godwin which may lead through further research to more definite information. A perfect conjecture of the latter sort is that made by John J. Brown (Todemorden, Ontario, Canada) in his article "Samuel Johnson and the First Roller-Spinning Machine," in *N.L.R.* for January (Discussed also in an editorial in the March 30 *P.L.S.*).

Brown's hypothesis briefly is that "beginning in 1730, Johnson was closely connected in some capacity with the invention of the first roller-spinning machine, which, developed by the organizing genius of

Arkwright thirty years later, became one of the prime instruments of the industrial revolution." The clues are not clear; many of Brown's surmises rest on very tenuous evidence; and the conclusions may later have to be thrown out as untenable. On the other hand, we do not know definitely what Johnson was doing during the years in question; he was undoubtedly near the workshop; and was later very friendly with the inventors. It is consequently possible that he may have had some connection with the original venture.

Certainly, the hypothesis deserves consideration and should lead to more serious investigation. Brown writes that he is himself on the trail of further evidence concerned with Lewis Paul and John Wyatt. Others of our readers may have suggestions or ideas about possible avenues of approach. If you can think of any clues send them in.

Miscellaneous Johnsoniana

D. Elton Trueblood writes that he hopes later this year to bring out a cheap reprint of his admirable little edition of *Doctor Johnson's Prayers*.

The Oxford University Press is reissuing John Bailey's small volume (long out of print) in the Home University Library, *Dr. Johnson and His Circle*. For this second edition, L. F. Powell has supplied an up-to-date bibliography.

A very interesting pamphlet which many of you will wish to read is *Dr. Johnson and Chinese Culture*, by Fan Tsen-Chung. Published by the China Society in London, copies may be secured from Luzac and Co., 46 Great Russell St., London for 2/6.

We hope you have been following the delightful verses on literary themes written by Helen Bevington, the wife of Merle Bevington of the Duke English Dept., which have been appearing in the *New Yorker* and elsewhere. Dr. Johnson plays a major role in these very amusing lyrics. For example, be sure to see "Dr. Johnson's Waterfall" in the *March Atlantic*.

T. S. Eliot is always good tinder with which to start a controversy. What about his remark in an article "What Is Minor Poetry" (*Sewanee Review*, Winter 1946), "I should myself regard Samuel Johnson as a major poet by the single testimony of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, and Goldsmith by the testimony of *The Deserted Village*?"

Boswell Notes

What is undoubtedly the best analysis of the character of Boswell yet to appear in print is Fred Pottle's "The Life of Boswell" in the Spring 1946 number of the *Yale Review*. Every student of the Johnson circle should read this article carefully and mull over Pottle's convincing remarks. We understand, by the way, that the Cornell Univ. Press is issuing a new edition of Pottle's very important critical work *The Idiom of Poetry*, completely revised and with three additional chapters. But more of that in our next issue.

The Viking Press is offering for sale a few complete sets of the *Malahide Boswell Papers* (Current price -- \$430.00). Perhaps this is an augury that the cheaper edition will not be long delayed.

The Boswell Club of Chicago has announced the adoption of a watch chain trinket, in the tradition of the Phi Beta Kappa key, as a symbol of membership. As one account has it, "the ornament will be of silver, in deference to the simple tastes of the club's patron saint, Dr. Samuel Johnson, and will resemble a bottle out of which rosy goblets may be filled."

Destruction in London

William Kent, in a short account in the latest *New Rambler*, describes the effect of the "blitz" on some Johnsonian shrines. Johnson's church, St. Clement Danes, is "but a shell....The pew, commemorated by a tablet in 1851, and the adjacent stained glass window (1909) have been destroyed....Remarkable to relate, the statue at the east end of the church — the work of Percy Fitzgerald in 1910 — was not damaged in any way....

"Bromley Church, where Johnson buried his wife in 1752, has been badly damaged; the gravestone, with the Latin inscription, remains *in situ*, but is cracked in three places.

"The chambers in Brick Court, Temple, where Goldsmith died in 1774 have entirely gone, and Fitzgerald's memorial medallion with them. A fragment remained after the bombs had wrought their havoc, and this was perforce demolished. The Stone on the north side of the Temple Church, bearing the inscription 'Here lies Oliver Goldsmith,' remains....

"In St. Paul's Cathedral a bomb pierced the floor of the north transept and made a huge hole into the floor close by Bacon's statue of Johnson. The statue, however, remained unimpaired. Nollekens' bust which had been placed in the Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey,

shortly before the commencement of the War, was removed for safety. Happily the Abbey sustained little damage."

A Contest

Which writer of the 18th century used the longest sentences? This question has been suggested by Edward Hooker in a recent letter. He comments: "Have you glanced recently at Wycherley's Preface to his *Miscellany Poems*? In the ten and a half pages of the Montague Summers' reprint I find, by a hasty and horrified calculation, that there are five sentences containing approximately 5,500 words of text. One of these sentences is short, a second fills only one page, but the rest, as John Dennis would say, are *tremendous*. Can you match that? Dr. Johnson is a *miser of words* by comparison. Wycherley's grotesquerie looks like the *reductio ad absurdum* applied to somebody — perhaps some flatulent, leather-lunged pretender to wit who was currently exhausting the literary gatherings of coffee-house and tavern. I don't know any such character, though. Perhaps it is just a flare-up of virtuosity."

Do any of you have a rival candidate?

News of Members

The appointment of Dick Greene (Rochester) as President of Wells College was announced late in March. For the past few years he has been one of our most active members, having been Chairman of Group VIII for 1945. Certainly all his Johnsonian friends will wish Dick well in this new undertaking.

Bob Metzdorf, Curator of the R. B. Adam Collection at the University of Rochester, is working as a visiting fellow in the Houghton Library at Harvard.

Ernest Mossner flew to England on March 27 for three months' intensive research on Hume.

R. P. Bond writes from Chapel Hill: "For forty months your *JNL* followed me here and there in my Naval travels, and was always welcome. The Doctor had something good to say about almost everything, but I doubt if he could have anticipated being read about on a flight deck in the Philippine Sea. Well, I've laid the braid away against the day of the parade, and am now striving to recover from scholarly amnesia."

Henry Pettit, back at the Univ. of Colorado, writes: "Your accounts of the meetings in Chicago were excellent substitutes for reality and helped console me for not being able to be there myself. It would be

a pleasant custom if the News Letter would detail the 18th century meetings annually and summarize the papers and discussions....The University of Colorado, in common with other universities I suppose, has a record enrollment and the living accommodations remind me of the tour to the Hebrides with eager S.J.'s sleeping on pallets thrown down wherever there is a semblance of shelter....I have never seen such greediness for book learning...."

T. W. Copeland has returned to Yale, and hopes together with Milton Smith to get back to work soon on the check list of Burke's letters.

L. H. Butterfield, formerly of Franklin and Marshall, has become Ass't Editor of Princeton University's great project, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. He writes: "As You know, this work is planned to extend to a minimum of fifty volumes appearing over an interval of ten years. The editorial work is now seriously beginning, but the combing of manuscript repositories, especially those abroad, must still go on. I should be very glad to hear from anyone who knows of letters by or to Jefferson or other Jefferson documents that may have escaped our search."

Phil Gove (U.S. Naval Air Station, Seattle, Wash.) hopes to be released from the Navy about July 1.

Guggenheim Fellowships

In a recent announcement of grants for special research there were a number of projects directly or indirectly bearing on 18th century literature. Louis Landa (Chicago) will go to England and Ireland to complete a study of the clerical career and the religious thought of Swift. W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. (Yale) is to write on the relation between form and content in literary art. Huntington Brown (Minn.) is doing a critical work on the types of prose style in English literature. William Mathews (U. of Calif.) is preparing a descriptive bibliography of British diaries and memoirs.

Our readers also will welcome the news that R. C. Bald (Cornell) has received a fellowship to complete his biography of Donne.

Some Recent Articles on Swift

For your files here are some Swift items supplementary to Landa and Tobin's superb bibliography: R. W. Babcock, "A Pilgrimage to Moor Park," *Dalhousie Review*, April 1945; John Hayward, "Jonathan Swift, 1667-1745," *British Book News*, October 1945; J. J. Hogan, "Bicen-

tenary of Jonathan Swift," *Studies -- An Irish Quarterly Review*, Dec. 1945; Florence Moog, "Gulliver Was a Bad Biologist," *Univ. of Kansas City Review*, Spring 1946; Ruby V. Redinger, "Jonathan Swift, the Disenchanter," *The American Scholar*, Spring 1946; Lois M. Scott-Thomas, "The Vocabulary of Jonathan Swift," *The Dalhousie Review*, Jan. 1946.

Other Articles

Your editor confesses that before he read the recent article describing Matthew Prior's collection of paintings, by H. Bunker Wright and H. C. Montgomery in *The Art Bulletin* for Sept. 1945, he had not realized the extent and merit of Prior's personal holdings. To be sure, many of Prior's pictures were small, and some of those representing the great masters were not of the best, but no modern connoisseur would turn up his nose at a collection containing works by Holbein, Murillo, Poussin, Rembrandt, Guido Reni, Rubens, Tintoretto, Titian, Van Dyke and Veronese. It is evident that Prior was much more of a student of art and a better collector than many of us had known.

A few other artict articles not in the standard scholarly journals which some of you may have missed are; Austin Warren, "The Mask of Pope," *The Sewanee Review*, Winter 1946; W. L. MacDonald, "A French Life of Pope," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Jan. 1946; Percy M. Young, "Observations on Music by Tobias Smollett," *Music and Letters*, Jan. 1946; Mark Schorer, "Blake as a Religious Poet," *Sewanee Review*, Spring 1946.

The New Rambler No. 7

The July 1945 number of the *New Rambler*, the publication of the Johnson Society of London, has recently reached us and contains much news of interest to us in this country. We are grieved to hear of the deaths of two staunch Johnsonians — Lord Charnwood and Sir Edward Boyle. Lord Charnwood, at one time Mayor of Lichfield and active in Staffordshire affairs, was better known on this side of the Atlantic for his life of Lincoln. He was also an able student of the 18th century. He and Lady Charnwood, both active in the Johnson Society, lived at a country seat just outside Lichfield, where in pre-war days they were accustomed to offer hospitality to those who attended the birthday celebrations in September.

Some of the articles in this issue are: "Fanny Burney and Chessing-

ton" by E. M. Nesbitt; "William Windham" by W. H. Graham; "Some Notes on Boswell's Life of Johnson" by H. E. Clayden; "The Literary Club" by William Kent; "Lichfield in Our Time" by O. D. Savage.

The New Rambler No. 8

The January 1946 issue contains the following: "Dr. Johnson's House As It Is" by Lord Harmsworth; "A Change of Opinion" by Frances Jolly; "Johnson's Autobiography" (the unsolved problem of the conflicting evidence concerning Johnson's diaries, etc.) by R. W. Chapman; "Dr. Johnson in Bournemouth" by C. Burley; "Origins of *Who's Who in Boswell*" by J. L. Smith-Dampier; "Wreath Laying Ceremony in the Abbey"; "Samuel Rogers, Poet" (A critical estimation of Rogers' poetry) by Arthur Kidd; "After the Blitz" by W. Kent; "Birthday Celebrations" (Chiefly a full account of the Lichfield celebration) by O. D. Savage. Included in both issues are the usual examination papers by the Rev. R. Park, and various personal notes.

It is unfortunate that restrictions as to the use of paper in England force the editors of *The New Rambler* to keep the size of their mailing list inflexible, since many of our readers, we are sure, would be entertained as well as informed by many of the articles in each issue. Perhaps when conditions improve it may be possible for our London colleagues to send more copies of *The New Rambler* across the Atlantic.

Unanswered Johnson Problems

In No. 7 of *The New Rambler*, Ronald Park listed a number of problems, the answers to which he could not find. In the next issue of the paper some of the mysteries were dissolved by various correspondents, including R. W. Chapman, H. E. Clayden, J. L. Smith-Dampier, and L. F. Powell, but three appear to be inexplicable. They are:

- (1) Why did Johnson omit any mention to his three oldest friends, Taylor, Adams, and Hector in his will?
- (2) Why was Johnson married at Derby?
- (3) What is the significance of "Dr. Johnson 1759" inscribed on the conduit in the Marketplace at Uttoxeter?

Did Johnson omit the names of some of his best friends in his will through mere forgetfulness? Was the marriage held at Derby as a "neutral" place, because of the opposition of relations in Birmingham and Lichfield? Was the date 1759 on the conduit at Uttoxeter

merely due to ignorance? Or are there better answers? Write in if you have any evidence bearing on these problems.

Americans may be interested to know that the plaque at Uttoxeter depicting the act of Dr. Johnson's penance was placed there after a visit of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Johnsonian Apocrypha

We have been greatly disappointed at the lack of response to our request in a former issue of the *JNL* for apocryphal stories concerning Dr. Johnson. Certainly all of you must have been deluged with stories which do not sound authentic, but which you cannot be sure of definitely. Do send them in, and we will promise not to connect your name with the story, if you prefer.

The only two which we have collected certainly do not appear to have much validity. For example, J. W. Krutch tells us of a remark passed on by one of his pupils. Johnson was supposed to be listening to a young girl play the piano. Someone asked him what he thought of her execution. He replied that he was in favor of it.

And there is the story that Johnson and Boswell while on a tour halted at a small village. Johnson, desirous of some stimulating conversation, asked that the most learned man in the village be brought before him. This man proved to be the cobbler. At once it was understood that each should ply the other with questions in order to ascertain who had the most knowledge. Johnson first asked the cobbler, "Do you know who my father was?" To which the cobbler gave the correct answer. Whereupon the cobbler asked Johnson if he knew who his father was, and Johnson was stumped.

Can any of you provide information about the origin of these tales?

A Final Reminder

Please do not forget to send in listings of your research projects.

